

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle

Wallace Hartley. visitors to Colne cemetery have claimed to hear ghostly sounds of a solo violin playing near Hartley's resting place and have detected a strong smell of the sea

Wallace Hartley was indeed a notable figure who is remembered for his bravery and musical talent aboard the RMS Titanic. Born on June 2, 1878, in Colne, Lancashire, England, Hartley displayed an early aptitude for music and became proficient in playing the violin. He gained recognition for his skills and began performing solo violin concerts at a young age.

Eventually, Wallace Hartley secured a position as the bandmaster on the luxurious ocean liner, the Titanic. The ship embarked on its maiden voyage from Southampton, England, on April 10, 1912. Tragically, just four days into the voyage, on April 14, the Titanic struck an iceberg and sank in the North Atlantic Ocean, resulting in the loss of over 1,500 lives.

Hartley and his band members famously played music on the deck of the ship, providing solace and comfort to passengers amidst the chaos and impending disaster. According to witness accounts, Hartley and his band continued to play until the very end, as the Titanic descended beneath the waves.

Following the sinking of the Titanic, Hartley's body was recovered by the cable ship Mackay-Bennett on April 26, 1912. He was found with his violin case strapped to his body. Hartley's remains were brought back to his hometown of Colne, where a large crowd gathered to pay their respects during his funeral procession. The funeral took place on May 18, 1912, and an estimated 40,000 people lined the streets to honor his memory.

To commemorate Wallace Hartley's heroic actions and musical legacy, a memorial was erected in his honor on Albert Road in Colne. The memorial serves as a tribute to his bravery and the enduring memory of the Titanic's tragic voyage. Some reports suggest that visitors to Colne cemetery have claimed to hear ghostly sounds of a solo violin playing near Hartley's resting place and have detected a strong smell of the sea, adding to the mystique surrounding his story. Wallace Hartley's life and his role as the bandmaster on the Titanic have captured the imagination of people around the world, symbolizing bravery and selflessness in the face of tragedy. His legacy serves as a reminder of the enduring power of music and the human spirit.

By Donald Jay